

GAVE THEM A SCARE

An Artist's Account of an Excursion in a Balloon.

The Air Ship Took Things in Its Own Hands and Went Wherever It Pleased—A Dangerous Drop from the Clouds.

Robert V. V. Sewell, in the "Artist's Adventures Series" in the Century, describes his first and last balloon ascension.

It was in 1886, when Mr. Sewell was a student at the Académie Julian, that he made his venture, taking advantage of a public ascension. When the artist and the aeronaut entered the basket the ropes were cast off.

We did not rise, and being informed that we must leave behind either a landing or my heavy winter overcoat I heroically sacrificed the latter. Standing in the basket I tossed it to a friend, when, presto! he as well as the rest of the world sank out of sight. At that moment I sat down. I can still recall the howl of derision and delight which greeted this commonplace act.

The cries of the spectators were succeeded by a most profound silence, broken only by the feeble creaking of the willow basket as my companion leaned from side to side.

I was soon aware of another sound, to which my ears seemed slowly to become attuned—the low, muffled roar of the great city, which produced a continued note almost as a musical tone, but lower in pitch than any note of the musical scale.

The barometer soon showed an elevation of half a mile, and, looking over the side of the car (I was still seated on the floor) I saw the whole of Paris pass beneath me—the public buildings, the Madeleine, with its bright copper-green roof, the toy cathedral of Notre Dame on its little island. The distance was so great that all gladdens was gone, and the roar of the city was hushed. Throwing out much of our store of sand we rose into great cumulus clouds. The barometer indicated a height of



SMASHING THROUGH TELEGRAPH WIRES.

Two miles; the air had the pure but thin feeling of an Alpine mountain top. There was no sight, no noise save the rattling of the feet of two pigeons on the summit of the balloon. They had refused to leave us, and, after hovering like land birds about a ship, had settled on our rigging.

In the utter silence of these heights the novice, awed by the sublimity of the situation, has no thought of danger. The vast, sightless, silent void in which the bubble hung self-poised impressed the mind with a sense, not of violence, but of calm. Yet danger there was, and that most imminent. Anxiously scanning the barometer, my companion announced that we were falling. Seizing a bag of tissue paper he threw a handful from the car. Instantly they disappeared, but above us. We were rushing down to the city at an angle of about forty-five degrees. Now the two pigeons left the balloon, and even this slight diminution of weight gave us a short respite. As we approached the earth we struck the ground breeze, which we saw would carry us nearly the entire length of the city. Quickly divesting ourselves of our coats and waistcoats, we took a rapid inventory of the pitifully small remainder of ballast, with a view to keeping the air ship aloft as long as possible.

To a novice who has ever gone down a toboggan slide the horror of that rush over the spires and chimneys of the great city may be dimly shown if he can imagine his sensations increased a thousand fold. Collision with a building meant almost sure death, while the speed was so great that landing in a boat would be an impossibility. The roar of one street as it flew past was quickly followed by the roar of the next, as the excited and interested Parisians watched our flight. Several times we avoided collision only by throwing out a coat, basket, or bottle, the balloon each time taking a slight bound and clearing the obstacle.

Are Men Not to Be Trusted? Here is a singular fact that reflects rather badly upon our lords and masters. Among the insurance people there is constant controversy as to the advisability of taking risks on women's evils. Very conservative companies refuse them in toto, while others issue such policies under certain reservations and restrictions. For example, no company will insure a wife's life in favor of her husband, while nine-tenths of the policies issued to men are for the benefit of their wives. When cross-questioned on this point an officer of a great life insurance concern evaded an answer, but finally confessed that they feared men would abuse their opportunities.



TO SUCCEED PEIXOTO.

Prudente de Moraes, the President-Elect of Brazil.

President-elect Prudente de Moraes was born about fifty years ago of wealthy and influential parents in Piracicaba, a large and important city in the middle of the coffee zone of the great state of São Paulo. He was educated in the best schools of his native country and adopted law as a profession. He early went into politics,



PRESIDENT-ELECT PRUDENTE MORAES.

and gained distinction as representative of his native state in the lower house of parliament in the days of the empire. His course there as a republican in a very small minority was moderate and distinguished for consummate tact and dignity. He made good use of his thorough knowledge of parliamentary laws and usages, and employed his ability as a debater to good advantage for his cherished republican principles.

In 1889, when the republic was declared, Moraes was assigned the difficult position of governor of São Paulo, which state he organized against the wealthy and influential monarchical party, which, though now in the minority, still shows formidable strength, declaring, as it does, the larger part of the expenses of the revolution that started in Rio Grande do Sul. In 1890 São Paulo sent him to the constituent assembly, called for the purpose of promulgating the republic's constitution, and he was unanimously elected president by that body. He was then elected vice-president of the senate, of which, owing to Peixoto's elevation to the chief magistracy of the nation, he has been the only actual presiding officer. Minister Mendonça, who was a fellow-student in law with President-elect Moraes, describes him as apparently a man of most gentle nature, but in reality a very energetic and uncompromising, though just, impartial and, above all, tactful. He will not take office until November 15 unless Peixoto resigns in the interests of peace on or after May 3, when congress assembles.

LARGEST FISH.

To Land One Requires the Strength of Several Able-bodied Men.

The fish abounds on both the coasts of Florida and in tropical seas. The jewfish is frequently found in the deep holes and channels in the salt water inlets. The specimen we illustrate, says the Scientific American, weighed about three hundred and fifty pounds, and was captured near Tampa bay, Fla., by Mr. H. Bomford. The huge fish after being harpooned twice and wounded in three places on the head with a hatchet, lived two days, and was finally butchered and sold. It required the services of three men to land the fish, and they worked an hour



THE JEWFISH.

and a half to accomplish it. Specimens of jewfish have been captured which weighed over five hundred pounds. It is said that even the largest jewfishes are good eating, the Cubans considering them a great delicacy. Some of the stories related of the strength of the jewfish are very remarkable, and it is said that boats have been towed out to sea by this fish. The jewfish will often break hooks and lines which are strong enough to capture a good sized shark. Mullet bait is usually used in catching the jewfish. This fish frequently floats on the surface of the water, apparently asleep, and is sometimes shot instead of being harpooned. The jewfish is probably the largest food fish known.

Mourning by His Dog. One of the sincerest mourners at the grave of the late Prince Esterhazy was his dog Nero. The faithful animal followed the hearse from the palace to the church, and from thence to the railway station, proceeding with the mourners to Eisenstadt, where the remains were interred. For some days Nero could not be induced to leave the grave, and he has since paid daily visits to the tomb.

South Carolina's Blowing Wells. South Carolina has a large number of "cold" or "blowing" wells. They are situated in the celebrated "Sand Hills region," and the majority of them are of enormous depth. The force of the current of air which continually comes from them varies in intensity according to atmospheric conditions, being particularly strong for several hours before and after heavy thunderstorms.

Mollie's Choice. As Mollie opened her eyes the other morning, nurse came into the room with a bundle under her arm. "Look!" she said, bending down so that the little girl in bed could see. "Here's a nice little brother sent from Heaven to this morning." Mollie eyed the baby curiously and then queried: "From Heaven?" Nurse nodded assent. "Well," said Mollie, turning over on her pillow: "I would rather have an angel—or a harp!"—N.

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A Sure Sign.
The business man suspected that one
of his clerks was doing more gambling
than was good for him, and he sent an
old employee to investigate. He made
his report very soon.
"Well," asked the employer, "what
did you learn?"
"That he bets some."
"A great deal?"
"O, no, only a little."
"How do you know?"
"Well, I asked him about a game of
poker he sat in the night before, and
he said, 'Yes, I was there and I won
twenty-five dollars.'"
"I should say that indicated he was
very deep in it," exclaimed the horri-
fied employer.

"Quite the contrary," dissented the
investigator. "If he had been at it
very long he never would have said, 'I
won twenty-five dollars,' but I win
twenty-five dollars.' That's the only
genuine sign of a veteran at the busi-
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